

THE ECONOMY OF INDO-CHINA

on there have been a series of abortive attempts to improve the quality of the colony's sugar by introducing new cane, notably from Reunion. Appropriate land and climatic conditions should make this crop most lucrative, especially in Annam, but the price of production is very high, notably when compared with the superior Javanese product. A serious study of local conditions means a likelihood of improvement, with the possibility of at least capturing the local market.

Tobacco

Until recently tobacco was almost wholly a family crop, raised by the natives for their own consumption. Even in areas where it was important, few farmers counted on it exclusively to assure their livelihood. Although production never filled the colony's needs, there was a little commerce in the tobacco crop.

Cambodia is the country most suitable for tobacco, although it is raised in all parts of the peninsula. With its good yield per hectare and its high sales price, tobacco should be highly remunerative for the producer. But it needs a great deal of water, abundant labour, and more fertilizer than the natives can buy. The majority of profits go to the middlemen, who are, of course, Chinese. It is still profitable enough, however, for tobacco to have ousted cotton in certain regions of Cambodia.

Indo-Chinese tobacco has the great drawback of a flavour which cannot compete, even in local favour, with the light tobacco from Java or the Philippines. The result has been that Indo-China every year was, until recently, importing more and exporting less tobacco. In the early 1920*5 the quantity sent to France made it appear probable that the colony would be that *Regie*\$* great provisioner. In 1908 the subject was first broached when an official mission drew

France's attention to
 this possibility. Two years later some samples were sent
 upon request.
 The matter was dropped until after the War> when
 efforts were again
 made to tempt the *Regie**\$ jaded taste. It seemed at
 that time as if
 successive analyses would go on indefinitely.
 Unfortunately the *Regie*
 eventually selected a variety that was raised in a very
 underpopulated
 region, and which could only be produced in small
 quantities. More-
 over, the price offered by the *Regie* for the product packed
 and shipped to
 Marseille was less than its value in Indo-China. Not
 discouraged, the
 colony asked for another local investigation^ but the
R4gie preferred
 after reflection to buy elsewhere. It looked then as if
 Indo-China must
 needs be content with the local market, which the
 administration had